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ABSTRACT

The pilot study reported investigated changes in the educational values perceptions of student teachers, university supervisors, and cooperating teachers during the spring semester of 1971 at Lincoln East High School, Lincoln, Nebraska. Subjects included 76 student teachers, 69 cooperating teachers, and 32 university supervisors. The author-developed Educational Values Perception Inventory (EVPI) was administered to all participants as a pretest and posttest. The 56 items on the EVPI were divided into six major categories: philosophy of education, role of teachers, role of students, attitudes toward evaluation of students, teaching methodologies, and curriculum content. Each item was rated by participants on a five-point Likert scale. Scores were computed for both the total test and for each of the six categories; t-tests and F-ratios were used to determine the level of significance. Comparison of pretest scores showed a significant difference between all groups; differences in posttest scores, however, were not significant. Although overall change scores from pretest to posttest were not significant for any group, the greatest amount of change was demonstrated by student teachers, who tended toward greater congruence with cooperating teachers and greater dissonance with university supervisors. All three groups were more liberal on the posttest. On the basis of data from this study, the EVPI has been revised and is being used in further studies. (RT)

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EDUCATIONAL VALUES PERCEPTIONS AND THE STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE:
ASSESSING CHANGES IN VALUES PERCEPTIONS WHICH OCCUR FOR STUDENT TEACHERS,
UNIVERSITY SUPERVISORS, COOPERATING TEACHERS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Introduction

Many assumptions have been made about the importance of the student teaching experience in the professional preparation of teachers. Most of those assumptions have been based on the concept that contact between the university student preparing to be a teacher and the exemplary classroom teacher will lead to the development of better teaching skills and attitudes for the neophyte professional. Such a model of apprenticeship or internship is not, of course, unique to educational professional preparation programs.

A central question is of continuing importance: Does the student teaching experience in fact lead to the development of better skills and attitudes? To answer this question is not enough. Since most student teaching programs are based on dual supervision as provided by a university supervisor and a cooperating teacher, the probable sources of such changes as do occur must be identified. And, in the identification of sources of change in the student teacher's behaviors, the interaction with school administrators cannot be overlooked; research has tended to support the concept that the school administrator is the prime source of the educational climate which exists within a building.

Other questions also assume major importance. If the perceptions of student teachers do change, what is the direction of change? As professional identification is developing within the student teacher, does he also serve as the impetus for change in the perceptions of experienced professionals?

Research findings on values and beliefs offers some mixed directions. Kohlberg has suggested that the most rapid growth occurs when the interaction be-

tween two people is characterized by conflict resulting from a difference of one level in the value perceptions held by the pair. More rapid, at least, than that which occurs when there is either "perfect" congruence or highly dissonant situations.[1] This view is similar to that provided by Lewinian theory which predicts that, in situations of dissonance, there will be movement in the direction of the communication received. In contrast, dissonance theory predicts that the individual will become more convinced that his original choice was correct if he receives discrepant information. In a classroom experiment, Oshikawa[2] discovered that a check of the effects of feedback on individual conflict resolution showed results which would support Lewinian theory.

A recent article best expresses the assumption that has been followed in this study:[3]

> . . .there is considerable reason to believe that productive learning and growth happens only when the "climate" of a setting avoids dysfunctional tension while providing some degree of dissonance for the individual, an element of stress in his perceptions of "what he is" as compared to "what he can become."

Another assumption has also been made: we must pay more attention to, and develop better methods of assessing, values and value changes. As Milton Rokeach has recently reported, "It now seems to be within man's power to alter experimentally another person's basic values and to control the direction of the change."[4] In the

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[1]Lawrence Kohlberg. "The Child as a Moral Philosopher," Psychology Today, (September, 1968).

[2]Sadaomi Oshikawa, "Consumer Pre-Decision Conflict and Post-Decision Dissonance," Behavioral Science, Volume 15, Number 2 (March, 1970), pp. 132-140.

[3]Edgar A. Kelley and Marie E. Kelley. "Measuring Classroom Environment: An Educational Imperative," Michigan Journal of Secondary Education, (Spring, 1971).

[4]Milton Rokeach. "Persuasion that Persists," Psychology Today, (September, 1971).

research reported by Rokeach, students at one university showed changed behaviors as long as seventeen months after the experiment--and the experiment had lasted for only forty minutes and involved no coercive techniques!

If the student teaching experience leads to changes in values, the quality of that experience can be improved if efforts are taken to enhance intended outcomes and eliminate unintended outcomes. Such efforts must be aimed at all possible points of impact: the student teacher, the university supervisor, the cooperating teacher, the school administrator and the students in the classrooms where student teachers gain their laboratory experiences. The study reported in the following pages was undertaken as a pilot effort to identify and describe existing outcomes for four of these groups. Additional efforts are needed to clarify and expand the focus of the efforts reported here.

Description of the Study

The pilot study reported investigated the impact of changes in the educational values perceptions of student teachers, university supervisors, cooperating teachers, and building administrators during the spring semester of 1971. All four groups investigated were employees of, or assigned to, Lincoln East High School, Lincoln, Nebraska. Permission to conduct the study was granted to the investigators by the Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln, Nebraska and by the administrators of Lincoln East High School.

Three major questions were investigated:

1. Did student teachers retain the same educational value perceptions during the semester?
2. When changes occurred in the value perceptions of student teachers, did those changes reflect greater congruence or dissonance with the perceptions held by university supervisors? By cooperating teachers?
3. Did cooperating teachers retain the same educational value perceptions throughout the semester?

Seventy-six (76) student teachers, sixty-nine (69) cooperating teachers, thirty-two (32) university supervisors and eleven (11) administrators were involved in the study [N = 188]. Lincoln East High School enrolls students in grades seven through twelve; student teachers were placed at all grade levels.

Collection of Data. The Educational Values Perception Inventory (EVPI), Form 711, was administered to all participants as a pre-test and post-test measurement of educational values. The EVPI was constructed by the investigators and, prior to its use for this study, was administered in several situations involving graduate students in the Department of Secondary Education, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, other staff members, teachers, principals, and other school personnel. Refinements in the early stages yielded fifty-six (56) items for Form 711 of the EVPI as used in this investigation.

The EVPI was administered to student teachers two days prior to their reporting for their first day of student teaching (February 1, 1971). University supervisors, cooperating teachers and school administrators completed the first administration of the EVPI during the first week of February. University supervisors completed the instrument individually; all other groups were administered the test in a group context.

Post-test data was collected individually from all participants during the last week of May, 1971. Responses were collected by mail and were returned to the Department of Secondary Education, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Treatment of Data. Responses on the EVPI were divided into six major categories: philosophy of education, role of teachers, role of students, attitudes toward evaluation of students, teaching methodologies, and curricular content. Each question was rated by participants on a five-point Likert scale with one (1) showing strong agreement and five (5) indicating strong disagreement.

A total score was computed for each individual and for each group. Scores were computed for both the total test and for each of the six categories. Means, variances, standard deviations, and frequencies were also computed. T-tests and F-ratios were used to determine the level of significance. Comparisons used in this study were (a) between each pair of groups, (b) across all groups, and (c) within each group by comparison of pretest and posttest scores.

Comparison data for individuals (on pretest and posttest scores), comparisons for dyads (student teacher-cooperating teacher, student teacher-university supervisor, cooperating teacher-university supervisor) and comparison scores for triads (student teacher-cooperating teacher-university supervisor combinations), are not reported here. All initial findings are reported in group scores and are shown in Table I in the Appendix.

Findings of the Study

The initial question to which this investigation was addressed was whether student teacher perceptions of educational values remained constant during the semester of student teaching. Questions on the EVPI were generally arranged so that lower mean scores reflected a more liberal stance while higher mean scores reflected a more conservative educational philosophy. During student teaching, student teachers became more liberal in their outlook although the finding is not within the established .05 level of significance. Of some passing interest is the finding that male student teachers became more liberal as did female student teachers; male student teachers, however were initially more liberal than female student teachers and this difference increased during the semester of student teaching. Many earlier studies have indicated that male teachers are less likely to remain in the profession than are female teachers. While this has been traditionally explained in terms of salaries and opportunities for career advancement, some consideration should be given to the variables suggested by Stern and

Steinhoff.[5,6] From their studies, it would appear that the more aggressive, more achievement-oriented, and more change-oriented teacher is more likely to leave a system or the profession. If males are more change-oriented (or "liberal") than females, this may be one explanation for the attrition rate for male teachers within the profession--a hypothesis which requires further study.

Change in the educational values perceptions of student teachers was also analyzed according to the five subject matter areas in which the number of participants within the study was large enough to permit comparisons and findings. These subject area groups were: social studies, mathematics, foreign languages, men's physical education and English. On the pre-test, these five groups ranged from most liberal to least liberal in the following order: men's physical education, foreign language, mathematics, social studies, English. On the posttest, the order of most liberal to least liberal was: men's physical education, foreign language, English, mathematics, social studies. Although most comparisons were not highly significant, some general trends should be noted. Student teachers in the areas of foreign language and mathematics became less liberal in their views while student teachers in the other three areas became more liberal. Student teachers in English became more liberal to an extent which was significant at an .02 level of significance. These general trends, occurring within the relatively short span of one semester, should be further investigated on a longitudinal basis. Another study conducted at the same time indicated that student teachers in the field of English identify more strongly with practicing teachers than do student teachers in other subject matter fields. This finding, coupled with the finding of this study that practicing teachers are more liberal than the

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[5]George G. Stern. People in Context. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1970.

[6]Carl R. Steinhoff. Organizational Climate in a Public School System. USOE Cooperative Research Program, Contract No. OE-4-225, Project No. S-083, Syracuse University, 1965.

student teachers, may suggest that student teachers in the field of English tended to pattern themselves very strongly after the models provided by their cooperating teachers.[7]

Of the six categories of questions comprising the EVPI, student teachers showed significant changes (.05 level or better) in two areas: perceptions of the role of the student and perceptions of the role of the teacher. In five of the six areas, one or more subject matter groups showed perceptual changes significant at the .05 level. The complete reporting of this data is provided in Table I in the Appendix.

The second major question which was asked in this study was whether the perceptual changes which did occur for student teachers tended toward greater congruence or dissonance with the perceptions of cooperating teachers and the perceptions of university supervisors. Over the experimental period, student teachers changed in ways which tended toward greater perceptual *congruence* with cooperating teachers and greater perceptual dissonance with university supervisors. All three groups were more liberal in their responses on the posttest and all three groups showed the same order in most liberal to least liberal on both the pretest and the posttest: cooperating teacher, student teacher, university supervisor. On both pretest and posttest, school administrators reflected a high degree of congruence with the perceptions of university supervisors.

Of the three major groups--cooperating teachers, student teachers, university supervisors--student teachers showed the most significant changes in perceptions and the direction of that change was toward greater congruence with their cooperating teachers.

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[7]Edgar A. Kelley and Larry James Walter. Student Attitudes Toward the Teacher Preparation Program of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln: 1970-1971. Mimeographed Report, Department of Secondary Education, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1971.

The third question to which this study was addressed was whether the value perceptions of cooperating teachers changed as a result of their interaction with a student teacher during the semester. While the question cannot be directly answered as comparative data was not collected for those teachers in the same setting who were not working with student teachers, the changes which occurred for cooperating teachers involved in this study can be reported. While the general direction of responses was to a more liberal point of view, the changes which occurred were not significant. One interesting observation is provided by the data: the perceptions of male and female cooperating teachers became more congruent as the result of changes in a more liberal direction for female cooperating teachers and changes toward a more conservative view by male cooperating teachers. The reasons for these shifts cannot be determined and must await further investigation.

One general finding should also be reported. Analysis of pretest scores across the four groups yielded differences significant at the .01 level. On the posttest, there were no significant differences in the perceptions measured across groups. When the six variables were isolated, only one significant difference remained in the posttest assessment; across the four groups, comparison of mean scores yielded signficant differences(.05 level) in perceptions of teaching methodology.

At the start of the experimental period, male university supervisors reflected a more conservative stance than did female university supervisors. Males became more liberal and females became more conservative during the experimental period. Supervisors as a group were more liberal on the posttest than on the pretest and both males and females obtained the same mean score on responses to the EVPI. Changes which occurred were not at statistically significant levels.

Implications, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Several critical observations should be made about the findings reported for the pilot study described in the preceding pages. While the findings show a trend across all four groups toward a more liberal perception of educational values, the lack of comparative data drawn from school settings in which student teachers were not placed prevents any conclusion as to whether the changes noted are a direct result of the presence of student teachers. Future studies will need to investigate this point.

The findings do indicate that the interaction of groups or individuals holding differing points of view regarding educational values tends to provide outcomes consistent with Lewinian theory, i. e., the participants tend to change in the direction of the information received. What should be noted with great interest is that the direction of such changes is not one-way; to make the necessary adjustments, some groups changed to a more liberal stance while others became more conservative in their responses.

The group showing the greatest perceptual changes was student teachers and, considering the philosophical purposes for providing student teaching, questions should be raised as to the approaches which could be used to match student teachers with cooperating teachers in such a way as to provide the greatest possible benefits to both. More precise measurement by instruments such as the Educational Values Perception Inventory, used in this study, may help to make the student teaching experience an even more valuable educational endeavor--both for the learning of the student teacher and for impact upon the school setting where the student teacher is placed.

Consideration must be given to the role which university supervisors are to play. Better analysis and selection of university supervisors could lead to improved programs of school-university cooperation and to the development of

inservice programs for the continuing professional development of university supervisors. If one assumes that an "open" attitude toward educational values is important, the findings of this study do not support the view that university-based personnel are most "open" in their approaches to education and to educational change.

Continued use of the instrument used in this study, and its comparison with other value-related and perceptual instruments, is needed to provide a higher degree of validity to the measurement of educational values perceptions. Future studies need to more carefully investigate the placement of particular combinations of differing values within the common triad of student teacher-university supervisor -cooperating teacher. Such investigations can help to more clearly specify the parameters of the student teaching relationship for all participants. As data from such investigations becomes available, further studies should investigate the impact of the same types of differing combinations on the perceptions of students in the classrooms instructed by student teachers.[8]

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[8]The authors of this study have, on the basis of the data received in the pilot study, revised the EVPI and will be using Form 712 in additional studies at Lincoln East High School and at other schools in the Lincoln Public School System. Present plans call for the development of a more broadly-based longitudinal study at Lincoln East High School.

APPENDIX

TABLE I

COMPARISON OF PRETEST AND POSTTEST DATA ON THE EDUCATIONAL VALUES PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT TEACHERS, UNIVERSITY SUPERVISORS, COOPERATING TEACHERS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Group	Pre-Test	Post Test	Total Data	Philosophy	Student Role	Curriculum	Evaluation	Teacher Role	Methods
	Means								
Student Teachers	3.60	3.55	.18	.26	.04*	.14	.16	.04*	.18
Males	3.57	3.51	.16	.34	.18	.02*	.28	.47	.07
Females	3.61	3.59	.35	.30	.05*	.41	.11	.08	.12
Social Studies	3.70	3.64	.35	.23	.08	.47	.32	.30	.32
Mathematics	3.51	3.63	.17	.04*	.44	.47	.11	.25	.42
Foreign Lang.	3.41	3.47	.39	.32	.13	.16	.08	.46	.26
Men's P. E.	3.33	3.32	.45	.08	.35	.11	.47	.34	.11
English	3.72	3.51	.02*	.05*	.05*	.39	.05*	.01*	.31
Cooperating Teachers	3.55	3.53	.36	.24	.32	.23	.13	.48	.21
Male	3.46	3.51	.23	.49	.37	.07	.45	.19	.11
Female	3.67	3.56	.17	.24	.30	.44	.06	.18	.48
University Supervisors	3.77	3.72	.28	.35	.39	.15	.19	.40	.37
Male	3.84	3.72	.12	.23	.17	.26	.20	.39	.03*
Female	3.63	3.72	.16	.15	.06	.23	.36	.31	.12
Administrators	3.77	3.72	.28	.18	.17	.48	.28	.43	.04*

* Significant at .05 level or better.